The Anglican Digest



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THE ANGLICAN DIGEST

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Editor

The Rev. Canon Dr. Kendall S. Harmon PO Box 2730, Summerville, SC 29484-2730 Phone (843) 821-7254 e-mail: ksharmon@mindspring.com

Managing Editor
The Rev. John Dryden Burton

Board of Trustees

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Inquiries and Correspondence

805 County Road 102 Eureka Springs, AR 72632-9705

Phone: 479-253-9701

FAX: 479-253-1277

email: anglicandigest@att.net Web site: anglicandigest.org

Mr. Tom Walker, General Manager



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Advent Hope

We live in a world in which "bigger and better" define our expectations for much of life. We have become so enamored by super-size, super-stars, and high-definition that we tend to overlook small things and their potential. But throughout the Scriptures, we find God usually works with small beginnings and impossible situations.

Most of the Biblical heroes are

frail and imperfect:

• Abraham, the coward who cannot believe the promise;

• Jacob, the cheat who struggles with everybody;

• Joseph, the immature and

arrogant teen;Moses, the impatient murderer

who cannot wait for God;

Gideon the cowardly Baal-

 Gideon, the cowardly Baalworshiper;

· Samson, the womanizing drunk;

David, the power-abusing adulterer;

· Solomon, the unwise wise man;

 Hezekiah, the reforming king who could not quite go far enough;

 A very young Jewish girl from a small village in a remote corner of a great empire.

If God used all of them for such great work, it is likely that

God is able to use us, inadequate, unwise, and too often lacking in faith. We best not, in self-right-eousness, put limits on what God can do with the smallest things, the most unlikely of people, and the most hopeless of circumstances.

Listen to young children, recite the words of Handel's *Messiah*, look to the leaves falling in the crisp morning light — this is the wonder of Advent. While many today talk about the death of Jesus and the atonement of sins, the early Church celebrated the Resurrection and the hope it embodied. Advent is a time of expectation for the Incarnation and Christ's return in glory — a past and future orientation filled with hope!

Those who have suffered and still hope understand more about God and about life than those who have not suffered. Maybe that is what hope is about: a way to live, not just to survive, and to live authentically amidst all life's problems with a faith that continues to see possibility simply

because God is God.

May our Advent be filled with wonder and hope.

The Rev. Joyce Stickney,
 St. Aidan's, Malibu, California

Christmas Without Anglicans?

One of the things I like most about the Christmas season is the music. It only occurred to me recently that so many of the Christmas carols came to us from Anglicans. Even our popular image of jolly old St. Nick was shaped by a professor of biblical studies at (of all places) an Episcopal seminary.

"'Twas the Night Before Christmas" is a poem published anonymously in 1823 and generally attributed to Clement Clarke Moore, a professor of classics at Columbia and lay Professor of Hebrew and Bible at the General Theological Seminary in New York (built on land he donated). The poem, which has been called "arguably the best-known verses ever written by an American," is largely responsible for the conception of Santa Claus from the mid-nineteenth century to today.

And what about the carols? The text of the popular "O little town of Bethlehem" was written by Phillips Brooks, an Episcopal priest, long-time Rector of Trinity Church in Boston, and

later Bishop of Massachusett He was inspired by visiting Bethlehem in 1865. At Chriss mas, 1868, he asked his organiss Lewis Redner, to write music for the poem he had writted Redner's tune, titled "St. Louiss is the one most often used.

John Mason Neale, an Anglica priest, scholar, and hymn-write translated many ancient hymn including the Christmas classs "Of the Father's love begotten He was also responsible for much of the translation of the Advent hymn "O come, O com Emmanuel," based on the "Green O Antiphons" for the wee preceding Christmas. Neale most enduring and widely known legacy is probably h own original Christmas contit butions, most notably "Goo Christian men, rejoice" and H Boxing Day carol, "Good Kin Wenceslas

The Anglican priest Charle Wesley penned the classic "Han The herald angels sing." To original words were reworked by his friend and fellow priese George Whitfield into the verse familiar to us today. The "Fath of English Hymnody" Isaa

Isaac Watts, a nonconformist minister in the Church of England, wrote the famous carol "Joy to the world!" Anglican bishop Christopher Wordsworth penned the famous carol, "Sing, O sing, this blessed morn."

Christina Rossetti was an English poet and a devout Anglo-Catholic. Two of her poems, "In the bleak midwinter" and "Love came down at Christmas," became popular Christmas carols. Cecil Alexander, wife of a bishop in the Church of England, wrote the hymn "Once in royal David's city." Nahum Tate, the son of a priest and England's poet laureate, wrote the hymn "While shepherds watched their flocks by night." At the age of twenty-nine, English writer and Anglican layman William Chatterton Dix was struck with a sudden near-fatal illness and confined to bed rest for several months. While his illness resulted in a deep depression, out of his traumatic experience, he wrote the lovely carol "What Child is this?"

What would Christmas be like without Anglicans?

The Rev. Timothy Matkin,
 SSC, Commanche, Texas

Guiding Principles

The mission of the church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ.

The Book of Common Prayer

On several occasions I have participated in the writing of a Mission Statement for a church or a school. We attempted to articulate the specifics of this universal work in our particular time and space. Too often we missed the mark and produced something overly wordy and rather mushy. When the product is too long, it is virtually guaranteed that the body of people will not be able to memorize and internalize the mission statement. As a result, when it comes time to make a tough decision, people are ill-prepared to ask, "Based on the mission of our church, how should we proceed with... (whatever it is that we are wrestling with)?"

I have found it helpful to substitute Guiding Principles for a mission statement. They are easier to remember, more readily recalled, and therefore more likely to guide us as we go about the business of being the people of God.

Guiding Principles: Worship, Stewardship, Community, and Outreach.

Our church seeks to excel in four particular areas of ministry:

Worship – It all begins with Sunday worship. What we do here matters. We offer a variety of worship styles: the quiet and contemplative Rite I at 8 a.m., the variety of music and large community gathering at 10:00 a.m., and a relaxed evening service in the chapel at 6:00 p.m. In addition we offer Morning Prayer during the week and have a Wednesday evening Eucharist during the school year. In all our worship, we are a reverent people who try to love and praise God without taking ourselves too seriously.

Stewardship — We preach and teach the tithe (giving 10%) as a means of joy! We commit to working our way towards this goal through incremental giving; we mark where we are and work towards the tithe, increasing by one percentage point each year. Stewardship is also about the way we use our time and talent to glorify God and reflect our Christian faith.

Community — Best described as a combination of fellowship and

inreach, we like each other company and enjoy passing good time with one another after church at coffee hour or at some of the many fellowship events we offer over the course of the year Inreach is the pastoral care we offer to our parishioners as mark of Christ's command that we love one another as he had loved us.

Outreach — Everyone is worth of God's love because we are as made in the image of God. For this reason, Christians are called to offer service to all people in the name of Christ. In our church education has been the chie means of serving the community Through our founding of S Martin's Episcopal School, con tinuing an education ministry or our church campus, and through a seven-year relationship wit students and teachers at a local public elementary school, th people of our church have made important contributions to th lives of others.

These Guiding Principles an not exhaustive but help set ou priorities when we wrestle wit competing good ideas in a work of limited resources for the min istry of the church.

The Rev. Frederick DeVal
 St. Martin's, Metairie, Louisian

Advent Prayers

Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen; that ye may know me and believe me: I, even I, am the Lord, and beside me there is no Saviour: and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, my salvation shall not tarry. I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions: Fear not, for I will save thee: for I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Redeemer.

The Christian Year

We stand at the head of the Christian year. I am not sure that there is anything quite like it in the world; this composite of sanctities, this interweaving of story and prayer, of song and color, by which Christ is portrayed and brought before us. It is a solemn pageantry, which effects association with him whose life is being traced. It is a solemn processional, in which we actually move in spirit. It is an annual miracle, the marvel of which we only miss because we are so familiar with it.

It seems to me that, standing at the head of the Christian Year, we might well stand back for a moment, and think in the large of the Lord and Saviour, whose steps we are once more about to follow, as the sanctities unfold themselves.

Miles Lowell Yates

GRANT, O Almighty God, that as thy blessed Son Jesus Christ at his first advent came to seek and to save that which was lost; so at his second and glorious appearing he may find in us the fruits of the redemption which he wrought, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

O GOD, who wouldest fold both heaven and earth in a single peace; Let the design of thy great love lighten upon the waste of our wraths and sorrows; and give peace to thy Church, peace among nations, peace in our dwellings, and peace in our hearts; through thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

STIR UP, we beseech thee, O Lord, thy power and come: that by thy protection we may be set free from the dangers of our sins which beset us; and may be saved by thy deliverance: who livest and reignest with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

- St. John's, Savannah, Georgia

A Child My Choice

Let folly praise that fancy loves, I praise and love that Child Whose heart no thought, whose tongue no word, whose hand no deed defiled.

I praise Him most, I love Him best, all praise and love is His; While Him I love, in Him I live, and cannot live amiss.

Love's sweetest mark, laud's highest theme, man's most desired light, To love Him life, to leave Him death, to live in Him delight.

He mine by gift, I His by debt, thus each to other due; First friend He was, best friend He is, all times will try Him true.

Though young, yet wise; though small, yet strong; though man, yet God He is:

As wise, He knows; as strong, He can; as God, He loves to bless.

His knowledge rules, His strength defends, His love doth cherish all; His birth our joy, His life our light, His death our end of thrall

Alas! He weeps, He sighs, He pants, yet do His angels sing; Out of His tears, His sighs and throbs, doth bud a joyful spring.

Almighty Babe, whose tender arms can force all foes to fly, Correct my faults, protect my life, direct me when I die!

Robert Southwell (c.1561-1595)

Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and bring forth a Saviour. Isaiah 45.

The Kingdom of God

Conversations about God and hings of a spiritual nature seem o come out of the blue as happened while spending time with my daughter and a friend of ners. This friend asked if I believed in the concept of "Once Saved, Always Saved."

"Once Saved, Always Saved," imits one's approach to undertanding salvation in Jesus Christ. It opens up other quesions, for example, "Can you lose' your salvation once you nave attained it?" "Can you do anything you want once you have been saved?" In this context alvation means that once you have put your trust in the blood of Jesus Christ, have accepted nim into your heart, you are saved. In other words, as long as have accepted Jesus Christ as ny personal savior, I have no worries about heaven or hell. I know where I am going when I lie.

Later that evening, I responding to my daughter's friend by aying that I would rather talk about the Kingdom of God and now that plays out in your life. Infortunately, we didn't have hat conversation as it was get-

ting late. Had we been able to talk, this is how I would have approached the conversation.

Jesus' primary ministry, the thing Jesus came to do, was to preach the Kingdom of God. Along the way he healed the sick and suffering, he performed miracles, he even raised people from death to life. However, first and foremost, Jesus came to proclaim the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God is what life would be like on earth if God were King, and those other guys weren't. The Kingdom of God is not some wishy-washy idea of being good to each other, of being nice. The Kingdom of God is not some mushy sentimentality. The Kingdom of God is about freedom, peace, and justice. It is about bringing about freedom and peace through justice. It is not easy. It is about hard work and self-denial. In some cases it leads to death - Archbishop Romero and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., are notable examples.

Following Jesus, believing in Jesus, involves giving your heart to the ways of Jesus. It means to hold dear those things that Jesus held dear. Those things would be priorities for Jesus' vision of the Kingdom and would include:

justice, peace, a non-violent life, a deep concern for the marginalized of society, a spirit of hospitality and inclusion, and a generous heart.

The counter-balancing question to "Once Saved, Always Saved" is "Are All Saved?" Does one believe in Universal Salvation? Both of these questions focus on an afterlife. "When the afterlife is emphasized, our attention gets focused on the next world, whereas I think being a Christian is primarily about transformation this side of death." — M. Borg.

Maybe we should all go back to wearing bracelets with "What Would Jesus Do?" stamped on them. We need to be reminded daily about Kingdom priorities. In the face of poverty, racism, and injustice, what would Jesus do? What would Jesus have me do with my talents and my resources and my time. When we look at the world this way, when we give our heart to the things Jesus held dear, we become more authentically human, healthier, and more alive.

Maybe this is a start to that conversation.

 The Rev. Stephen L. McKee, Trinity, Tulsa, Oklahoma

Prayerful Encouragement

Several of my friends have su fered misfortunes in person health. How can one respond the misfortunes of others? Or way is to offer to pray for the person, and then to do so. It not with the expectation that on prayer would incline God to o something that otherwise would not happen, except for our inter vention, nor is it with the pri sumption that apart from on mentioning a situation, Go would be unaware of it. But: can be a source of genuit encouragement to know the others have our plights in min Our prayers probably will no change God's mind, but they w certainly change ours.

People are occasionally intimedated when it comes to prayed that dilemma is hardly new: The disciples asked of Jesus, "Lonteach us to pray." There are numerous patterns, disciplines, ar forms for prayer. The possibities for prayer are endless: tal home the lists of those prayed fon Sunday, include those peopin our regular prayers, in weeday Masses, and the simple (are endangered) form of pray known as grace before meals.

One of the fictions sometimes aid against Episcopalians is that ve cannot pray without a book. There is a story, probably apocyphal, of a priest at an interdenominational meeting of clergy, who is asked, sarcastically, to read one of the prayers out of nis book." The priest then says, Our Father, who art in heaven, tc." I am not so good at composng prayers when there is no ime for preparation. Sometimes, when I am asked to do this, I say, That's not a part of my tradiion." While a part of the tradiion of some clergymen of one of he Protestant denominations, heir prayers often seem like mini-sermons.

Of course, it is simply not true that we cannot pray without a book, but it does raise this question: Do we think we need to improve on what we have received as our legacy? For most of us, it is impossible to think about praying, much less attempt it, without the vocabulary and rhythms of the Book of Common Prayer. I am grateful for the rich legacy of the Book of Common Prayer. Its language and patterns of language have stood the test of time.

In the case of one of my unforunate friends, I knew just what to pray. The prayer we call "For all Sorts and Conditions of Men" (page 814) contains this operative petition: "...that it may please thee to comfort and relieve them according to their several necessities, giving them patience under their sufferings, and a happy issue out of all their afflictions." Is there something we need add to that? Is it necessary that I remind God that this applies to my friend - particularly since I was with her when the prayer was offered? Part of what the Prayer Book offers is freedom from the presumption of thinking that we can compose something so articulate and persuasive that God will surely pay attention and be stirred to act. Our Prayer Book is a treasury of prayer which offers a way to pray when our thoughts are too deep for words - particularly words of our own composing.

The Rev. George Salley,
 St. Paul the Apostle,
 Savannah, Georgia



New Year's Resolutions

Trying to decide on the focus of a January newsletter article, I asked the staff and volunteers in the office what they would like me to write about. There was no hemming and hawing. One said, "Tell the congregation that they need to make resolutions, and then keep them." Another said, "Tell them not to make resolutions because none of us like to add stress to our lives, and we usually don't follow through with what we say we'll do anyway." Another opined, "I'd rather remind you of your resolution than try to keep one of my own." "Be the change you want to see." Soon, I was faced with the task of unpacking their contributions and presenting them in an insightful and helpful way.

Our sincerity and enthusiasm in making resolutions (which typically have more to do with things like our inability to stop smoking and lose weight) have usually evaporated by February. So, why do we make them? I believe that deep down in our souls there is a natural craving, a gnawing, an ache, a God-provoked need to be better people. We are faced with the choice of either acknowledging our need

to be better people and doing something about it or we ration alize the state of our lives by saying, "I'm okay just the way I am I don't need to make an changes."

Now I believe God loves us a we are. I hope you do too. I also believe that God doesn't expect us to lead static lives or sit on or laurels. God's expectations of the are pretty high. After all, God created us and God doesn't constant with great gifts are opportunities to "do ever greater things than these," say Jesus.

So, whether a resolution of two is something you engage are each year, I have one that the believe will stand the test of time. Resolve that God will be first in your life, others second and yourself third. Here is one example as to how that might work: "I resolve to nurture the most important relationship my life, the one God established with me at my baptism, by being in church every week to praise and thank Him."

- The Rev. Barry P. Kuble St. Philip's Southport, North Carolin

Aerobic Intercession

How do we pray for persons in difficult situations? Sometimes the way is clear; often it is not. I pondered this when I had three friends with complex, life-threatening health situations. While I was on the treadmill at the gym one day, the Lord provided an answer: I could adapt the Jesus Prayer to intercession and coordinate my exercise movements with the words from the 19th century Russian spiritual work The Way of the Pilgrim, an account of a spiritual seeker on a religious journey. As he walked, the pilgrim pondered how he could fulfill St. Paul's injunction to "pray without ceasing." Eventually an answer came: he could pray continually by repeating a simple, profound prayer, step after step: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner."

Adapting the Jesus Prayer to intercessions, I changed the object from "me" to the name of the person for whom I pray. "Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on [name of person]." I synchronize the prayer words with my physical movements, my steps. I may pray in a whisper, with voiceless lip movements, or in thoughts only. I synchronize the Jesus I was pray in a whisper, with voiceless lip movements, or in thoughts only. I synchronize the Jesus I was pray in a whisper, with voiceless lip movements, or in thoughts only.

chronize the prayer words with my breathing and exercise movements.

A second form of intercessory prayer I use with aerobic exercise is a variation of the Kyrie Eleison: "Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy." With the Kyrie adaptation, I pray three times for each person before moving to the next individual, in this manner: "Lord, have mercy on (Name). Christ, have mercy on (Name). Lord, have mercy on (Name)."

A third intercessory exercise prayer is a simplified two-step, two-word one. I simply pray one word for each swing of the elliptical trainer or foot hitting the treadmill or ground: (1) the person's name and (2) my plea of "Mercy!" It recalls the whole Jesus prayer and what I ask: God's healing mercy manifested.

I find that with aerobic intercessory prayer:

1. I can intercede for an extended period of time.

2. I avoid "instructing" God how to answer my prayer.

3. My sometimes over-active intellect is subdued.

4. My body, mind, and spirit partner in praying.

 The Rev. Larry Harrelson, Meridian, Idaho Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, Bless this bed that I lay on. Before I lay me down to sleep, I give my soul to Christ to keep.

Four corners to my bed,
Four angels 'round my head,
One to watch, one to pray,
And two to bear my soul away.

I go by sea, I go by land, The Lord made me with his right hand, If any danger come to me, Sweet Jesus Christ, deliver me.

For he's the branch and I'm the flower,
Pray God send me a happy hour,
And if I die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take.

An Advent Sermon

YOU MAY HAVE HEARD of the Roman Catholic priest in New Jersey who told some children that Santa Claus was dead. The ensuing uproar was in the news for days and the priest went into hiding.

I will, therefore, choose my words with care! What I want to suggest is that the whole Santa Claus tradition has to do with an immature motivation. We tell

our children:

"You'd better not pout, you'd better not cry, you'd better be good ..." And we tell them why: If you're not, you won't get presents.

We may or may not have studied human psychology, we may or may not believe in Santa Claus ourselves, but we know how to get the job done: reward and punishment. That's the technique. And as long as it works, we use it. Woe be to the priest who suggests it's theologically unsound.

But we also know that eventually we want our children to develop a more profound theology than that. We want them to be motivated by more profound considerations than reward and punishment. That's fine for

training young children and domestic animals, but mature human beings are capable of more.

What happens, however, for many, many good Christians, is that their theological training leaves off at about the time their belief in Santa Claus leaves off. And their belief in Heaven often never gets beyond that level. Heaven is presented as God's final Christmas gift.

Heaven is for those who please God and there's alternative housing for those who don't. Our relationship with God is left on that childish level, while our own mature, adult relationships have long ago

moved far beyond that.

Why does Heaven matter?

Do you remember the hymn that says: "My God, I love thee, not because I hope for Heaven thereby, nor yet for fear that loving not I might forever die; not with the hope of gaining aught, not seeking a reward; but as Thyself hast loved me, O ever loving Lord."

No, a mature relationship is not based on fears and rewards, but it's based on love, the response of love, love of one who first loves us. In loving Him we find ourselves growing to a potential we never realized before.

Heaven is a result, not a reward.

Heaven matters because it's what we were made for. Small children are given candy when they get A's. Older children find the A itself reward enough. Mature students find the work is its own reward and value the mark only as a measure of their progress. Heaven's a lot like that.

I've met people, and probably you have too, who gave up believing in Heaven when they gave up believing in Santa Claus, and who will tell you, "Heaven is a distraction. What matters is how we serve God here and what we do now to show love for each other. If we spend all our time thinking about Heaven, we won't get our work done here and now." And I know there are people who will tell you that marking papers is putting the emphasis in the wrong place. It gives people the wrong motivation. Every now and again we go through a phase in which people want to eliminate marks and grading and grades and just let people choose their own speed and ba self-motivated. Fine. But is selfthe ultimate standard? Am I to find in myself the ultimate pur pose of life? I certainly hope no

No, I am a Christian because and in spite of the fact that i brings my life under judgmen that it brings me face to face with a Lord whose life makes mine look shabby but who give me a goal worth the battle, goal and direction and purposes

That's what Heaven's about The notion of Heaven probabl does begin in the childhood co our faith as threat and promise "The Lord Himself will come and He shall purge and reward then shall the righteous shine forth..." And that's fine for starters. But it becomes much more than that. It becomes a pic ture of God's kingdom, a pictur of a new relationship between God and His people, that will transform all life. It becomes goal toward which to aspire, standard by which to measur our progress. It shows us wha this world could be if God filled the lives of His people. "The shall the lion lie down with the lamb, then shall they beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks nation shall not lift up swore

against nation, neither shall they learn war any more... For in Christ Jesus there is neither slave nor free, neither male nor female ... they shall hunger no more neither thirst any more... God Himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain..." Yes, that's a promise; of course it is. But more important, it's a vision, a standard to judge by. A new way to see this community and New York City and every city. Does Heaven matter? Dorothy Sayers once said, "The best kept inns are on the through roads." It's the people who know where they're going who care what it looks like along the way, not the people on dead end streets. The Bible tells us that we are not on a dead end street. We're going to a place without tears and war and hunger. And, ves, that makes a difference now, makes it harder to tolerate now the fact that people are hungry, that people are lonely, that we spend more for war than for peace, more for bombs than for schools, more to store food up than to feed the hungry. It's fashionable to sneer at the Victorian Age, but was there

ever such an age for the building of churches in China and schools in Singapore and hospitals in India? They thought a lot about Heaven and they had a Biblical vision of a kingdom and they changed the world forever. I wonder why it is that the Marxist world is so resistant to change? Marxism begins with that same prophetic vision of a world of justice and equality but it never seems to work. Is it, I wonder, because they try to build the workers' paradise on a dead end street? It's the prophets' vision minus Heaven, and it just doesn't work; never could. And you only have to look at the dead end streets of our world to sense the frustration and anger that builds up there. God made us for a journey and we can't be contented unless we sense we're on the way. I wonder, too, about the people who try to force their heaven on you, the zealots and crusaders who seem to feel that they have to coerce us now to do it their way, who sometimes talk a lot about God but don't seem to trust Him. I think, for all their talk, they, too, may not really believe. And that's sad. It's sad to see people in high places resisting the kingdom and sad to see people of violence trying to

create the kingdom by force of arms. It's God's kingdom. He will bring it in His own way and His own time. There's a story told of a great

There's a story told of a great theologian who arrived at the gates of Heaven and was greeted by St. Peter (talk about all the old cliches) who said, "Welcome, Professor. This door leads to Heaven, and this other door leads to a place for a discussion about Heaven." You can imagine which one he chose.

But perhaps the point is that for him the other door would be Heaven: a chance to do eternally that which brings you most joy: to be who you are fully and forever. That would indeed be Heaven.

And that would never be alone. The Professor would need at least one other theologian for his Heaven to be complete. Perhaps the perfect discussion would be the perfect dialogue, a perfect relationship. So also, the string quartet requires three others. Even the painter needs a critic, an intelligent and appreciative audience. And Kipling suggests that audience is God.

The rest of Heaven, it would seem, must involve at the very center relationships that always fulfill, never frustrate and those we know, begin and center in the love of God.

There's more. Yes, we will see each other and know each other Yes, we will be fully ourselves (that's what the resurrection of the body means); fully ourselves for the first time.

But there's much more. Jesus spoke of "great spaciousness." And St. Paul says, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of marrithe things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. (I Corinthians 2:9)

And there's a wonderful comfidence that comes when we find ourselves moving with Him, a marvelous joy that comes when we catch even a glimps of the kingdom here and now Yes, the vision matters. Prace God we will see it more clearly day by day. And come to the Christmas Eucharist when that same kingdom is born again in our hearts that was born once in Bethlehem to bring us all a last to the peace and joy of Heaven.

- The Rev. Christopher I Webber at Christ Church Bronxville, New York on Adver IV, 1986

THREE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

ONE MIGHT think that all men would be glad to hear the news of Christmas Day, but the fate of St. Stephen tells us that is not so; the people to whom he told the good news were so angry that they stoned him to death. St. Stephen, the Church's first martyr, reminds us that Christ's disciples have no right to expect better treatment than their Master (John 15: 18ff). With the Christmas carols barely on our lips, the Church teaches us that those who are true witnesses to the Son of God born in a stable may get hurt: a sharp contrast to the escapism of those to whom Christmas means no more than a vague sentiment of goodwill. St. Stephen's Day makes us face life as it is and so understand what Christ can mean in our lives. It thrusts before us the problem of suffering; but horrible as was St. Stephen's death, we do not weep over it: rather we praise God for it. Throughout Christian history, the blood of the martyrs has been the seed of the Church. Even as St. Stephen died with words of forgiveness on his lips, nearby stood a man whose name was Saul.

Not all Christians are called to glorify God by a martyr's death; some are called to glorify Him by a long and dedicated life. Such a one was St. John the Apostle and Evangelist. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth." It was no invention of his own: St. John knew Jesus Christ the Son of God, a real Man whom he heard and saw and touched, and yet whom he knew to be one with the Father. Let us keep the Feast of St. John (27 December) with thanksgiving, and pray that his experience of the Christ may be ours also.

The Holy Innocents, those infants slaughtered by Herod in his attempt to kill the baby Jesus, remind us that the powers of darkness will stop at nothing to oppose the light of Christ. There is no escaping the consequences of the coming of Christ. He was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil (I John 3) and in that warfare the innocent and guilty alike are involved.

In the first three days of Christmas are commemorated a

young man, an old man, and some children. All of them, in their differing ways, typify responses to Christ's coming. One offered the Child of Bethlehem a passionate and fiery evangelism; another brought to the Lord a lifetime of reflection and patient persuasion; while the children, who knew nothing of it all, display an innocency of life no less precious in the sight of God. Their graces do not exclude one another; they are of a piece - varying aspects of mankind's obedient response to Him "who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was made man."

Taddled from the Uganda
 New Day

TWO MORE DAYS OF XMAS

On January first, while the secular world celebrates the pagan orgies of the Saturnalia, Christians celebrate the first shedding of our Lord's Blood, the Feast of the Circumcision. Every Jewish male child was

circumcised at the age of eight days as a token of God's covenant with Abraham (Genesis 17:9ff): only the circumcised could take part in the nation's religious life (Exodus 12:48). The Circumcision was the first occasion of our Lord's earthly lift that He suffered on our behalf and, as was the custom, it was the time He was given the name Jesus, "a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow (Philippians 2:9-10).

The great feast of the Epiphan was the original Christmas since it is the celebration of the first appearance of our Lord to the Gentiles. In all the Eastern Churches, 6 January is still "Christmas" and other occasions of our Lord's "showin forth" (the meaning of the Gree word "Epiphany") are also remembered - His showin forth as God's Son at Hi Baptism and the first revelation of His divine power at the wed ding feast in Cana. The preser Christmas, 25 December, be

"On 17 January, the meeting took place at the Vicarage, and ther was a discussion on the nature of the Christian life led by the Vicar." — A parish paper.

came popular much later in Christian history.

To this day, Kentucky mountaineers sing ballads learned from their ancestors which refer to the original observance:

The sixth day of January My birthday will be,

When the stars in the ele-

ments

Shall tremble with glee.

– Taddled from a parish paper

LIFE AND DEATH

IF the Eucharist is a service like any other service, then there is no overwhelming reason for staying in touch with the Church. If you don't like the priest, if the music is poor, if the sermons are uninspiring, and the view from the golf course seems more uplifting, why go to church? Isn't that sort of reasoning exactly what has caused the dwindling congregations in the Church and the Protestant religious bodies over the last hundred years since church-going ceased to be dictated by fashion?

Does it matter if people stay away from church? Of course, it's depressing for the priest and the faithful few; collections are meager; the inquiring unbeliever is repelled by the empty pews

and goes where the worshippers are thicker on the ground, but we all know what hypocrites churchgoers can be and what good lives some non-churchgoers lead, so what does it matter? It matters for the next generation and for the one after that. Every soul must be won individually (including those nominally within the Church) and the work is ten times harder when contact with historic Christianity has been lost, as it has been lost now that the third generation of non-churchgoers numbers thousands of people in our country. The results of the estrangement make no one happy but the writers of sensational headlines.

The issue of the Holy Eucharist is vital: it is a matter of spiritual life or death, and not just a question of administrative expediency. It is no good leaving the rocks on which we stand in order that we may all play together on the sands, if, when the tides of time have come and gone, there is no one there to carry on. Pan-Protestantism is not enough — it can do no more than provide a misleading temporary fillip.

 An English Churchwoman in the London Church Times.

Man --- Man --- Millian ---

NO CHEER

THE VENERABLE Vine V. Deloria is a Dakota Indian, a smart man, and a good priest. Some years ago he was enticed into the never-neverland of Church officialdom: after four years, he fled for his spiritual life back to his diocese and his people. He is now Archdeacon of South Dakota. Here follows a part of one of his recent columns in the South Dakota Churchman:

"I have nothing cheerful to report. All summer long, I have been seeing the plight of my Indian people. Many Indians farm, own lots of cattle, or have good jobs, and they are getting along fine (I am one of them, I suppose). Far, far too many others, however, are suffering physically from no means or inadequate aid; far, far too many on their home grounds or in cities are living in dwellings no Indian would have looked at thirty years ago. Economic calamity is breaking the spirit of the Indian people and their enthusiasm for life. My spirit weakens right along with theirs.

"Something should be done about it, all right; but a direct, uninvolved approach is needed. We can do without the usual sideline activities, programs and "little league" type of efficiently supervised excursions which only complicate, blue and, in the end, nullify objectives. Experts in Church and State are "forever learning" but they "never come to any knowledge" of the Red Man: what his real problems and worries are.

"You cannot blame the non Indian for his lack of under standing, nor yet the Indian who have been "civilized" which so-called civilization thinks that analysis and manip ulation is the only way to solv problems. Thus, the expert hold panels, forums, work shops, give lectures, conducsurveys, polls, publish books make movies, slides, and so on and on until they look like an exhausted kitten, lying on it side all webbed in by the spoo of thread it tangled with.

"No doubt the ancient Egyptians tried to make over the children of Israel in the image of the culture of the day; but for 430 years, they got no response They were trying to make the Jews sing in an Egyptian key. A long last, Moses, a Jewish botwho knew the Jewish key

returned to his people, sounded the note, and marched them away, Red Sea or no Red Sea. So, you experts in Church and State—why don't you look for an Indian Moses today? When you get a capable Indian, you educate him away from his people and make sure that he will pitch the non-Indian instead of the Indian key— a practice which, at the very least, is pretty poor communication."

Unfortunately, the foolishness scored by Father Deloria is not confined to Indian affairs. The Church's official publicity and far too many of her priests are singing an upper-middleclass, suburban siren song: the poor and the nation's "uninfluentials" are not singing along. The young are drifting away because they are both realists and idealists, and they can see full well that most parishes are trafficking in self-deception, and that all the self-important, lightlyconsidered pronouncements from pulpit and public relations offices have little temporal or eternal consequence. The rich are being not won but used to their souls' dis-ease: they are deferred to for their contributions, not put to work for the kingdom.

Part of the alarming leakage of membership in the American Church (one diocese recently figured that 50% of its confirmands were no longer around ten years later) might be traced to the idea that the fellowship of the Holy Ghost is a social one, rather than a worshiping one. A newly-confirmed family will find itself fitting into parochial life, not on the basis of its prayer life and spiritual development, but in relation to mother's acceptability to the bridge, or guild, or rummage, circle and the youngsters seeing eye to eye with the clannish and hostile youth group. The early Church welded into one body Roman senators, Greek slaves, Jewish merchants, and Samaritan outcasts because they met first before the altar, where men's differences melted away before the majesty and graciousness of God: they had nothing in common but our Lord Jesus Christ, but their lives were centered in Him. (When was the last time vou heard our Lord even mentioned during a coffee hour?) Today the meeting before the altar is an optional interlude in the myriad of activities in a parish (or a life), and if one should hear a well-constructed

sermon, it will be addressed to the special problems and preoccupations of college-educated, business-oriented folk: life and death matters of salvation and judgment (if mentioned at all) will be expressed in the latest theological jargon or thoughtforms. No wonder our parishes have little appeal to the juvenile delinquent, the union man, or the Negro, or to the real and diverse people we cover with such neat labels.

The revolution could come from our seminaries: they could cease to educate the young man with a vocation away from the people in his future parish (meaning all the people in his area, not just those congenial souls listed in the parish directory); they could train him to be first a man of prayer who "knows" more than he "knows about" (a parish priest needs theology in his head, but he needs it more in his bones). The revolution could start in the parishes, with the daily and weekly gathering around the altar of all sorts and conditions of men to praise God, and with the realization that the office of "minister" belongs also to the layman, and that the job of the priest (the "sacred minister")

primarily is to train the layman forgive his sins, and offer his worship to Almighty God.

The revolution may come (or may be coming) from either end or both: but it must come if will are not to continue to insult Fr Deloria's Indian brothers as well as all the common people of the earth and the God who loves them, with our self-centered self-serving, self-defeating parce dy of the Faith. It is not only Indian problems which need to be met with a "direct, unin volved approach" and a shurr ning of the "little league" sort or busyness. It is not many key, which must be harmonized (the Indian key, the trade union key the suburbanite key), but one hymn to be sung in the key all God's children find within their range and ability — that of Jesus Christ, the Resurrected and Ascended Son of Man and Son of God. — Taddled

MANNERS

Be thankful, be silent, be reverent. For this is the house of God. Before the service, Speak to the Lord; During the service, Let the Lord speak to you; After the service, Speak to one another.

Tell Me the Old, Old Story

Epiphany is sort of a poor relative as liturgical seasons go. It doesn't get a lot of attention. I have never seen an Epiphany card from Hallmark, and I don't know people who exchange Epiphany gifts. The Epiphany story in the Bible — the visitation of the wise men, or Magi, to the young child Jesus — has been swallowed by Christmas and moved to the stable with those gathered around the manger.

Epiphany is a strange word. Most of us would find it difficult to give a thumbnail description of what the church season is about. When we use the word in ordinary conversation, we are usually describing an "aha moment." I had an epiphany about something. I had a moment of understanding, a

flash of insight.

And, to make it worse, the season is sandwiched between Christmas and Lent when not much is happening. Lent may not be the high point of your spiritual year, but at least it is well known. As a Christian feast day and season, Epiphany actually predates Christmas. It was

once ranked with Easter and Pentecost as one of the three major holy days of the church year.

 ${
m T}$ he theme of Epiphany is spreading the light of Christ to all the world. In the first century, Judaism was very much a geographical religion, tied to the land of Israel. There was only one Temple, the place where sacrifices were offered, and it was in Jerusalem. The coming of the Messiah was first a Jewish event, but it wasn't limited or local. The Magi are Epiphany figures because they are the first people in the Bible who come from beyond the boundaries Judaism to recognize that something had happened in the birth of Jesus that would change the world. They were the first people other than Jews to come and worship.

That theme of Epiphany flows naturally into the notion of mission. The mission of the Church is to proclaim the love of God in Jesus Christ in word and deed. It is short enough to be remembered and clear enough to be understood. And for me, it is a powerful expression of who we are. We have a vision and a purpose. We are people who have

been touched and loved by God, and because of that we are people of mission.

As I grow older, I am more and more drawn to the story of faith. The good news of God's redemptive love is a story before it is theology. The meaning and purpose of my life can only be expressed and understood in the story of my life. I can speak of the love of God in Jesus Christ only in the ways that I impact the lives of others — in the places where our lives intersect. God's love must be experienced and shared before it can be understood. We can't convince anyone to love by describing what love is, but rather only by loving.

It doesn't matter what someone else believes about God, or what they believe to be absolute truth. That is the stuff of their story. The mission of being Christian is not to convince others that my understanding of the truth is the only true understanding. What matters is what I say and do. What matters is how I share my story. What matters is how I love others.

> The Very Rev. Joe Reynolds, Dean, Christ Church Cathedral, Houston, Texas

Blessed Be Christ Jesus

Oh blessed be Christ Jesus
This holy Christmas morn.
Oh blessed be our Savior
Who as a babe was born.
His Mother, Virgin Mary,
Beheld Him as her Lord.
Devotion never ceasing,
Her heart was pierced by sword

Might I in humble access Behold my Lord and King. And with my heart and spirit To Him all honor bring. Who came to earth our Savior In swaddling clothed was He. Lord, give me grace to follow And in your presence be. In love and adoration God gave His only son Redeeming His creation For us the victory won. Let me never cease to praise Hir Who came to set me free From sin and death's dark presence.

All praise and thanks to thee.

- © Sandy Dav



Trust God in All Things

We don't linger long at the anger, do we? Our hearts are till aglow and our spirits aninated with visions of shepherds ending their flock, Wise Men tho have journeyed from afar, nd the Holy Family – Mary, oseph, and their precious child. and then, before you know it, hey've packed up and fled outh to Egypt. I find it an irony f history that when Mary and oseph came to Bethlehem they vere not met with any semlance of hospitality. And yet when they ventured into foreign erritory, it's apparent that someody took them in and provided hospitable place for them to lwell while they awaited Herod's demise. Talk about rusting God in all things!

The story of the Holy Family's light to Egypt comes to us as we enter a new calendar year. We who experience and celebrate the annual trek to Bethlehem and the oy of Christmas morning will soon have everything packed up, orepared for our own journey to new place in time. Though there are no Herods in hot pursuit, our thoughts are apt to couch on what must have been on the minds of Mary and Joseph

as they headed into the unknown: the joy and surprise of things new and different.

We do not easily admit to weakness or being needy, but Christian maturity embraces dependency on God. This is the nature of things. God has created all and provides for us out of all that is created. It's worth noting that from time to time Jesus arranged for the early disciples to experience a healthy dose of being pushed beyond their limits (e.g. feeding the multitude when they had no food). It was in these times they learned to trust God, to reach beyond knowing into the realm of faith. So it is with us. Epiphany invites us into receptivity in the midst of those life and ministry experiences which pull us beyond the limits of our own ability to cope and manage. The spiritual discipline here is for us to yield to the Spirit of Jesus who indwells us, and call out to God: "Abba! Daddy!" Herein is freedom, freedom from our own self-imposed belief that we are supposed to be able, to be competent. Freedom to be a child.

> The Rev. Dr. Craig Kallio, St. Stephen's, Oak Ridge, Tennessee

The Sound of Silence

Musical rests are nearly always puzzling to my beginning piano students at first. I usually explain that rests are actually notes which are silent and have to be given their full value just as other notes do.

I say this to help them understand that rests are not optional. They can't just be skipped over to get to the rest of the "real"

music.

The parallels with life are many. Speaking or reading aloud and skipping punctuation make for a garbled mess. Nonstop talking to God in prayer leaves no room for us to hear God's response. Being a slave to the phone and computer while on vacation deprives us of needed perspective.

Properly understood, rests, punctuation, and other pauses are opportunities to listen and adjust our course based on what we hear. Elijah learned a valuable lesson when he recognized that God did not speak through storm, earthquake, or fire but in "the sound of sheer silence."

One of the oddities of singing hymns, psalms, and anthems is that pauses for punctuation and breath are not usually musically notated. Singers must shorter notes where they wish to breathe or execute a textual pause in order to avoid distorting the rhythm of the music. A sensitive accompanist will assist in this effort as well.

Listen for this and try to antical ipate places where the text demands shorter notes for clarifity. As we all become more sensitive to the meaning of a text, the more meaningfully we will recite or sing it and the richer our workship will become.

May we all learn to hear Goo in the silences of life and work

ship.

– Eliot Glaser, Organist & Choir Master, St. Dunstan's Tulsa, Oklahoma

G.G.G.G.G

Pass Along Hymnals

Although Operation Pass Along does not have space to recieve and store hymnals, we do have a request for a usable set and will be happy to connect a donor who wishes to dispose of some hymnals with someone who would like to have them. Send an e-main to us at anglicandigest@att.net or call: 479-253-9701.



THE ANGLICAN BOOKSTORE



Offering books that might not otherwise come to your attention.

The Amazing Grace of Freedom: The Inspiring Faith of William Wilberforce, by Ted Baehr, Susan Wales, and Ken Wales.



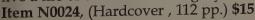
Film producer Ken Wales teamed with Ted Baehr of *MOVIEGUIDE* and author Susan Wales to create a lavish, full-color book about the enduring legacy and powerful faith of William Wilberforce. Filled with exciting historical details, this exciting book takes an indepth look at the life, times, and faith of this incredible man including essays from leading

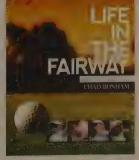
scholars demonstrating the tremendous impact of Wilberforce in his own time and in ours. Learn about the fascinating behind the scenes story of the six-year effort of its producer, Ken Wales, as well as enjoy a comprehensive treatment of Wilberforce including character sketches, contemporary commentaries, and images from the film *Amazing Grace*. **Item N0023**, (Hardcover , 144 pp.) \$20



Life in the Fairway, by Chad Bonham.

Chad Bonham, author of *Life in the Fairway*, presents in-depth biographies including the testimonies of several highly ranked golf pros. Draw courage from their relentless desire to achieve excellence on and off the course. Golf is a game of integrity. Players are their own referees. They make dozens of moral choices in each round. Draw inspiration from these leaders to live a life of unashamed integrity.

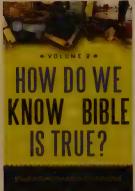






How Do We Know the Bible is True? (Volume 2), by Ken Ham

Bodie Hodge.



If you were asked how you know the Bible is true, do you have an answer? Over 29 issuees are addressed, including:

Who made God; where did God come from? Has Noah's ark been found?

Hasn't Bible text been changed over the years? Is Hell real?

Did the ten plagues of Egypt really happen?

We are an increasingly skeptical society whether it comes to politics, science, or even faith. People see conflict everywhere, even about fundamental aspects of the Bible. When

church leaders are at odds about biblical truth and scriptural authority, believers are left confused and uncertain, needing clear biblication truth.

Addressing topics from popular culture like the Shroud of Turin or "missing" books of the Bible, and even what makes God's Worc unique among holy books, How Do We Know the Bible is True? Vol. 2 is a "must have" resource for churches, libraries, and home study. Item N0020, (Paperback, 304 pp.) \$15

Also available:

How Do We Know the Bible is True? (Volume 1), by Ken Ham, Bodie Hodge. Item N0019, (Paperback, 300 pp.) \$15



Made in Heaven, by Ray Comfort, Jeff Seto.

Engineers and inventors have long examined God's creation to understand and copy complex, proven mechanics of design in the science known as biomimicry. Much of this inspiration is increasingly drawn from amazing aspects of nature, including insects to plants to man in search of wisdom and insight. We are surrounded daily by scientific advancements that



have become everyday items, simply because man is copying from God's incredible creation, without acknowledging the Creator.

How the glow of a cat's eyes innovates road reflectors

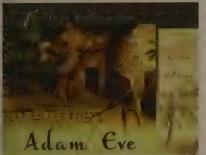
• The naturally sticky inspirations for Velcro and barbed wire

 A fly's ear, the lizard's foot, the moth's eye, and other natural examples are inspiring improvements and new technologies in our lives.

Item N0022, (Hardcover, 64 pp.) \$16



The True Account of Adam and Eve, by Ken Ham.



The True Account of Adam and Eve offers a biblical answer to the question: Were Adam and Eve real people or just generic references for all of mankind? It explains the connection between original sin and the gospel and emphasizes the importance of Adam and Eve as literal history to young and old alike.

When you unlock the door to bibli-

cal compromise, the door gets pushed open wider with each generation. The Church is now debating the validity of Genesis as actual history, the reality of hell itself, and even if Adam was a real person. Trying to change the biblical timeline to fit with the secular concepts of millions of years has led many in Christian academia to reject the literal interpretation of the Bible itself. Perfect for children, the book helps them discover the truth about the first man and woman, and how their disobedience led to the need for Jesus Christ.

Item N0021, (Hardcover, 64 pp.) \$16



Exploring Advent with Luke: Four Questions for Spiritual Growth,

by Timothy Clayton.

This creative exploration of Advent guides readers to rediscover the power of the events leading up to the birth of Christ. The four questions of Luke chapter 1, as posed by Zechariah, Mary, Elizabeth, and the people in the Temple, spur readers to personal reflection on disappointment, inade-

quacy, openness, and trust.

In Exploring Advent with Luke: Four Questions for Spiritual Growth, Timothy Clayton deftly shows how Luke composed this first chapter of his gospel to deepen understanding of the birth of Jesus and how meditation on the four questions posed by its main characters can help resolve issues that hinder the joy of Christmas. Designed to be used on a weekly basis through Advent and during the Twelve Days of Christmas, this reflective guide is



ideal for individual and small-group use. Clayton's insight is reminiscent of Henri Nouwen or Thomas Merton and brings the story of

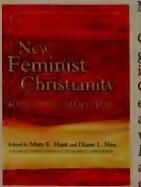
Christ's birth to life anew.

Item V0111, (Paper; 192 pp.) \$14



New Feminist Christianity: Many Voices, Many Views, Edited by

Mary E. Hunt and Diann L. Neu.



Feminism has brought many changes to Christian religious practice. From inclusive language and imagery about the Divine to ar increase in the number of women ministers. Christian worship will never be the same. Yet even now, there is a lack of substantive structural change in many churches and complacency within denominations. The contributors to New Feminist Christianity are the thought leaders who are shaping, and being shaped by, the emerging directions of feminist Christianity. They speak

from across the denominational spectrum, and from the many diverse groups that make up the Christian community as it finds its place in a religiously pluralistic world. Taken together, their voices offer a starting point for building new models of religious life and worship

Topics covered include feminist:

- Theological Visions
- Scriptural Insights

Ethical Agendas

Liturgical and Artistic Frontiers

Ministerial Challenges

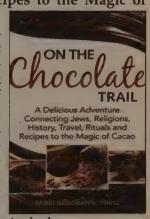
Item K0056, (Hardcover, 384 pp.) \$25



On the Chocolate Trail: A Delicious Adventure Connecting Jews, Religions, History, Travel, Rituals and Recipes to the Magic of

Cacao, by Rabbi Deborah R. Prinz.

Explore the surprising Jewish connections to chocolate in this historical and gastronomic adventure through cultures, countries, centuries and religions. Rabbi Deborah Prinz draws from her world travels on the trail of chocolate to enchant chocolate lovers of all backgrounds as she unwraps tales of Jews in the early chocolate trade to how Jewish values infuse chocolate today. She shows the intersections of Jews, pre-Columbians, Catholics, and Protestants along the chocolate trail and the lasting rituals involving chocolate that the



world's faith traditions still share. Tasty tidbits include:

 Chocolate making in seventeenth-century Amsterdam, home to the largest and wealthiest Jewish community of its time, was known as a special Jewish industry.

· Bayonne chocolate makers today advertise that Jews brought

chocolate making to France.

• Chocolate Hanukkah gelt may have developed from St. Nicholas

customs.

 Jews pioneered chocolate in North America as successful and well-known American colonial Jewish merchants such as Abraham Lopez and Nathan Simson traded cacao and manufactured chocolate.

 A born-again Christian businessman in the Midwest marketed his caramel chocolate bar as a "Noshy," after the Yiddish word for

"snack."

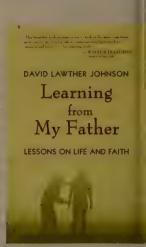
• Jewish values of caring for the needy, pursuing economic justice protecting the environment and promoting sustainability feed into the organic and fair trade chocolate businesses of today.

Item K0057, (Paper; 250 pp.) \$19

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Learning from My Father: Lessons on Life and Faith, by David Lawther Johnson.

As a freshman at Harvard, David Johnson felt displaced, homesick, and overwhelmed by new intellectual challenges. So he began exchanging letters with his father, a Presbyterian pastor. Years later, David rediscovered those letters and realized how much candid, fatherly advice they contained — and how their wisdom had shaped his life. Based on excerpts from these letters, *Learning from My Father* reflects movingly on life and death, faith and doubt, as seen through the eyes of a father and a son.



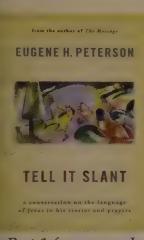
"Learning from My Father is, quite simply, a beautiful book — eloquent deeply moving, quietly passionate, and wise. At a moment when we seem eager to divide ourselves between an 'us' and a 'them,' Johnson speak across the lines of ideology and faith traditions to a human and human 'we.' Marrying his father's lessons to his own reflections, he reminds us that Christianity is not about ideological conflict or cultural mistrust. It calls u to attentiveness, responsibility, joy, and love. In offering this gift to hi father, Johnson has gifted all of us." — E. J. Dionne Jr., author of Ou Divided Political Heart

Item E1198, (Paper, 159 pp.) \$15

*

Tell It Slant: A Conversation on the Language of Jesus in Hi Stories and Prayers, by Eugene H. Peterson.

Just as God used words both to create the world and to give u commandments, we too use words for many different purposes. It fact, we use the same language to talk to each other and to talk to



God. Can our everyday speech, then, be just as important as the words and prayers we hear from the pulpit? Eugene Peterson unequivocally says "Yes!"

Tell It Slant explores how Jesus used language — he was earthy, not abstract; metaphorical, not dogmatic. His was not a direct language of information or instruction but an indirect, oblique language requiring a participating imagination — "slant" language. In order to witness and teach accurately in Jesus' name, then, it is important for us to use language the way he did.

Part 1 focuses on Jesus' words in everyday contexts— his teachings to the crowds, the stories he told, his conversations with his disciples. Part 2 shifts the focus to Jesus' prayers— the words he spoke to God the Father. Peterson's *Tell It Slant* promises to deepen our understanding of Jesus' words, strengthen our awareness of language as a gift of God, and nurture our efforts to make all of our speech convey a blessing to others.

Item E1199, (Hardcover, 304 pp.) \$17



Do We Worship the Same God?: Jews, Christians, and Muslims in Dialogue, by Miroslav Volf.

Often the differences between the three Abrahamic religions — Judaism, Christianity, and Islam — seem more obvious than their commonalities, leading to the question "Do we worship the same God?" Can the answer be "yes" without denying our differences?

This volume brings Jewish, Christian, and Muslim philosophers and theologians together to answer this question, offering rare insight into how representatives of each religion view



the other monotheistic faiths. Each of their contributions uniquely approaches the primary question from a philosophical perspective that is informed by the practice of worship and prayer. Concepts covered include "sameness" and "oneness," the nature of God, epistemology, and the Trinity. *Do We Worship the Same God?* models serious-minded, honest, and respectful interreligious dialogue and gives us new ways to address an ongoing question.

Item E1200, (Paper, 192 pp.) \$20





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Church Unity: the Impossible Possibility

Science has long searched for the unifying principle of the universe known as "the theory of everything" that fully explains and links together all known physical phenomena. Thus far, all attempts fall short. Isaac Newton's physics of cause and effect were eclipsed by Einstein's theory of relativity. The weird and wonderful world of quantum physics is to Newtonian physics as a cell phone is to two cans connected by string. Tests using the Large Hadron Collider in Switzerland represent our latest attempts to find "that which holds everything together," a mysterious particle referred to as the Higgs boson which theoretically identifies the underlying, subatomic "glue" of all matter, including you and me.

Science and religion could well consider the possibility that fruit from the tree of knowledge is not for our consumption. Wanting equality with God in knowledge is why we were kicked out of the garden. We are wonderfully and fearfully small as we stand before the vast expanse of life, death, and eternity. If and when Higgs boson is verified, a list of

new questions will be raised.

The universe within us is no less mysterious than the one held together by something we call gravity. If the human condition were a cake mix, the ingredients would include biochemistry, genetics, developmental psychology, family health or dysfunction, significant emotional events (e.g., trauma), and so on. Out of such mix, who hasn't asked the question: "Why do I keep doing the same stuff that causes so much pain and misery?" In Paul's words, "...the good I would do I do not, the evil I would not do is what I continue to do." We would love to "unify" ourselves in ways that bring peace and joy within and between ourselves.

The church is not immune to disunity. Mainline denominations, including the Episcopal Church, are hotly divided by issues of human sexuality, the mission of the church, Biblical interpretation, application, and more. If a national issue won't do it, we can find weighty local matters over which to do battle: the color of new carpet, building programs, the length of candles, children making too much racket ... the list goes on. Wherever two or three are gathered, there

are going to be some issues.

Jesus' prayer in the Gospel of John was that we may be one as he and the Father are one. "As you and I are One, Father, may they be one in us." If prayer is an expression of volition - what we most deeply intend — then it is fair to say that God's will is that the church be in unity. That does not mean we all think or look the same. Unity does not equate to uniformity. Uniformity about Christ has to do with how we go about the business of being a church liturgically, doctrinally, socially, biblically, and all the rest.

So what might be the unifying principle of the church? How does a sonorous reading of John's Gospel on Sunday morning translate into the church being something more than a family torn by strife, warfare, and disunity? Who or what holds us together in the midst of differences of opinion, personality clashes, or conflicting agenda? Why would a Baptist or Roman Catholic share communion with an Episcopalian? Why wouldn't or couldn't that happen? Don't we worship the same Lord? Read the same Bible?

Unity is established and maintained as it surrounds the rich-

ness of our differences. The mix which is Christian community requires liberals, conservatives, and all in between. My perspective and way of seeing is not yours and there is much we can learn from one another. The great sin of many churches occurs when the mission of the church becomes that of making everyone else *just like us*. This agendaresults in hierarchies of right eousness, walls that divide, and exclusion of the unwashed opparticularly sinful.

What is the unifying principle of and for the church? There are two elements, both of which are writ large throughout scriptures. One is constituted by God's love mercy, and grace. The other is our humility before God and with one another. In the absence of either, we are as divided and oppositional as those separated by the aisle in Congress.

Weekly Holy Communion is not received as a wage for good people but as a gift for one and all. Unconditional love means just that: without division or condition. Likewise, grace and mercy are God's unmerited favor. The rain doesn't descend exclusively on me and my friends but hits everyone on the street with out discrimination. Unity is born

of love and grace, not right doctrine, strict obedience, or correct politics, all of which are important but never the objects of wor-

ship.

The greatness of the Anglican Communion was forged by the wisdom and strength of the via media, the middle way between the mystery and reverence of the sacraments and the story of salvation (scripture) on the other side of the expanse. The Anglican Communion offers a strong bridge between dogmatic certainty in all forms and the vapor of "anything goes" on the other end of the spectrum. There is plenty of room on the bridge for disagreement, debate, and strong feelings.

Destruction of the bridge occurs when the politics of this or that group hijack the entire church. Whether or not that has happened is open for debate. There are those who claim to be swimming in turbulent waters, waiting for someone or something to rebuild the bridge. Others would say we are exactly where we are supposed to be, inviting those swimming in confusion to climb aboard. Still others left the bridge to join some other denomination or even start

their own.

If unity begins upon humble ground, it proceeds with the strategies and tactics of parsing differences in an atmosphere of openness and respect. That is true in marriage, parenting, the halls of Congress, dealing with difficult neighbors, as well as among churches. Human nature may sabotage our attempts, but the Godly imperative remains. We may ignore Jesus' prayer, but it will not go away.

To listen is an act of love which only happens when I can put aside "my way or the highway" ultimatums. To speak with love, courtesy, and respect and without apology or any attempt "to make you into me" represents a wonderful mix of love and hu-

mility.

The life-giving truth surrounding church splits and denominational battles was, is, and evermore shall be the life and love of The One who continues to pray for our unity. The apparent truth that we cannot "do the impossible" does not get us off the hook of seeking nothing less. That was Jesus' prayer. May it be ours as well.

The Rev. Rick Oberheide,
 Grace Church,
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FITHE REV. RALPH TRUMAN FUDGE, 78, in Belfast, Maine. He graduated from Colgate University in 1955 and Berkeley Divinity School at Yale in 1968. He was ordained as a priest in 1969. Fr. Truman served Christ Church, Westerly, Rhode Island, from 1968 to 1973, and St. Margaret's, Belfast, from 1974 until he retired in 1995. He was also an adjunct member of the faculty at Bangor Theological Seminary from 1987 to 1993.

THE REV. DR. MARY-MAR-GUERITE KOHN, 62, in Baltimore, Maryland. She earned her M. Div. in 1992 from Duke Divinity School and was ordained to the priesthood in 1994. She served as interim rector at St. Mark's, Newport, Vermont, and assistant rector at St. Stephen's, Pittsfield, Massachusetts, from 2000 to 2002. Dr. Kohn came to St. Peter's, Ellicott City, Maryland, as associate rector in 2003 and since 2009 was co-rector until her death from gunshot wounds she suffered in a shooting at St. Peter's. In 2009, she earned a doctorate in pastoral counseling from Loyola University Maryland.

THE REV. DR. GARY DEE MCCONNELL, 72, in Searcy, Arkansas. He was a graduate of the Episcopal Theological Seminary of Kentucky and was ordained in 1970. He served as deacon at St. Luke's, North Little Rock; as vicar at St. Stephen's, Jacksonville; and retired in 2006 as rector of Trinity, Searcy, where he presided for more than 30 years. He spent many summers directing senior high camp sessions at Camp Mitchell on Petit Jean Mountain.

H THE REV. PAUL WADDELL PRITCHARTT, 82, in Spartanburg, South Carolina. Fr. Pritchartt graduated from the Divinity School of the University of the South and received a Doctor of Divinity, honoris causa, from Nashotah House. Over the course of his ministry, he served parishes in Virginia, Tennessee, and Georgia before becoming rector at Church of the Incarnation in Dallas, Texas, where Fr. Pritchartt served for 18 years. Renowned for his articulate, insightful, and thoughtprovoking preaching, Fr. Pritchartt was a guest preacher in

Edinburgh, Scotland, as well as St. Paul's Cathedral, London, and The American Cathedral in Paris.

¥ James E. Solheim, 73, in Trenton, New Jersey. He served as the Episcopal Church's director of news and information from 1989 until retiring in 2004. In Massachusetts, he served as editor of the diocesan paper, Episcopal Times. He was founding editor and designer of Event, a monthly magazine dealing with social issues (1968-74); associate editor of A.D. Magazine (1977-83); editor of World Encounter (1984-88), and associate director of interpretation for the world mission office of the Lutheran Church in America. He was, starting in 1983, editor of Grapevine, the monthly newsletter of the Joint Strategy and Action Committee (JSAC), a coalition of the national mission agencies of 14 Protestant churches.

HAZEL WEST, 86, in Waterloo, Iowa. Hazel was a homemaker and served as a school secretary for 12 years before retiring in 1977 to Eureka Springs, Arkansas, where she and her husband built their home at Hillspeak. Hazel was well known for

her beautiful dresses and other seamstress work she made for her family and loved ones for more than three generations. She was a faithful Episcopalian.

H THE REV. CANON LARRY G WILKES SR., 61, in Arnaudville Louisiana. After retiring from the U.S. Navy in 1989, he entered Virginia Theological Seminary Ordained to the priesthood in 1992, he served at three parishes in southern Virginia until 1996 when he again answered the cal to the sea through a commission to the U.S. Navy as a chaplain After again retiring from the Navy in 2001, he served as asso ciate rector at San Jose Episcopa Church in Jacksonville, Florida 2003, he relocated to Arnaudville where he served a rector of Church of the Ascension for four years, leaving the parisl to work as the Canon to the Ordinary. In 2009, he started serving as the priest for Church of the Epiphany in New Iberia.



Rest eternal grant to them, O Lord; And let light perpetual shine upon them.

Unwavering Love

In truth, life is full of transitions; that is the nature of living. We grow, change, and adapt or we die. We are creatures of routine, we long for stability, we like to be able to control what happens to us. Yet we constantly find burselves having to adjust to new situations in our lives. What is true for us as individuals and families is also true for us as a church. The church is a living organism — people coming and leaving, people changing and growing older. Why then do we long for stability and constancy? If life is ever-changing and the only alternative to living is dying, why do we desire a home, a haven? I do not have the full answer, but I think this is how we are made. We are made to long for home, we are made to long for stability, we are made to desire that which never changes we are made, of course, for God - or perhaps more accurately, God's love.

Life happens. Things change. We grow. We diminish. What

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never changes is God's unconditional love, God's desire for us, God's dream of our full humanity. Life changes, we change, the people around us change, institutions change, our community changes, the church changes... But God's love never wavers. God's love is always there. God's love is a constant source of strength, encouragement, and hope, no matter what happens and happen it will. All we need do is pray. All we need do is worship. All we need do is turn to the scriptures. All we need do is care for each other and we find that love is there, always there.

"God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them ... There is no fear in love." May we all live in love more deeply each day.

-The Rev. Simon C. Justice, Church of the Good Samaritan, Corvallis, Oregon

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Membership, Discipleship, and Stewardship

Looking back to those early days as the new Interim Rector, I suppose it was that first Easter Sunday morning at Church of the Heavenly Rest when I caught something of a vision of the immense potential of this remarkable church. I had been warned that the church would be filled to capacity, but it was so much more than the numbers' factor which caught my breath and set me thinking. Of course, I realized that inflated numbers on great festivals is still not unusual in this country, but I also realized something else. Clearly, very large numbers of families and people regard Church of the Heavenly Rest as their Church, as the church to which they belong, and also where they would want to feel welcomed whenever and for whatever reason they had cause to attend. And it was to that larger community with undefined parameters to which I had been called - along with all the "ministry staff" - to minister, to pastor, to care for and to help to draw into a deeper commitment and a living faith in Jesus Christ. In that way, I would be building on the foundation of the ministry of Jim Burns, your much-loved previous rector while helping to forward the ongoing work of my clergy colleagues and the rest of the stafand volunteers at Heavenly Rest

Although, during the summer months, numbers necessarily diminish on Sundays, my clergy colleagues and I decided that "Business as Usual" would be our slogan during the summer season, while also giving us time to reflect and plan our aims and objectives for the fall. Three objectives are quite clear Membership; Discipleship; Stewardship.

Membership – Archbishor William Temple said "the Church is the only society which exist for the sake of those who aren' members of it." Put another way the only qualification to be member of the Church is th desire to be one. The desire to belong - not least in a vas world-city like New York should never be underestimated even amongst people with com pelling professions and th demands of parenting, or th unemployed or the retired. So membership of a church shoul always be aimed at building sense of a community of faith, i which it's possible to question verything, in which all feel here is something for them and o which they feel they belong, nowever loosely.

Discipleship — Members of a church, even fringe members, need to know that they are on a spiritual journey and although here are front-runners in the vanguard of discipleship, everyone on that journey can benefit rom Christian education programs. These further and deepen our faith and move us along the road of discipleship. A Quiet Day, a Bible Study Group, a Prayer or Study Group - these programs lead us from merely belonging to believing to a living faith in a living God. They enlighten our minds, warm our hearts and fire our wills. They ransform our lives.

Stewardship — True discipleship issuing from an holistic faith, while comforting the disturbed, also necessarily disturbs the comfortable. It leads, in turn, to a totally new worldview with new responsibilities - whether it be with regard to the environment, to our gifts and talents, our time, our relationships, our financial resources, or whatever. All are re-envisioned as gifts entrusted to us from a generous God who invites us to respond with equal responsible generosity for the building up of his Church and the forwarding of his Kingdom.

Resolve to reconnect and recommit to your Church and your chosen community of faith.

The Rt. Rev. Michael Marshall,
 Church of the Heavenly Rest,
 New York, New York

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O Taste and See

Austin Farrer was an Oxford don, a philosophical theologian, and the priest of C. S. Lewis. He was also a superb preacher in an age when the art of preaching, like most other forms of rhetorical art, was falling into decay. This passage from a sermon called "Praises of Thanksgiving" touches upon the great themes of thankfulness and the enjoyment of God - themes which are especially pertinent to the celebration of the Eucharist, the Church's sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. "O taste and see how gracious the Lord is" (Psalm 34).

"The best way of thanking God is to taste his goodness with all our palate. It is not good making speeches of thanks to a musician, if you are bored by his performance. You may deceive him. Indeed, if you are a clever hypocrite, and can act the attention you can't be bothered to bestow. But God reads our hearts and knows whether we taste his kindness, or not. Enjoyment is the sincerest thanks.

"Now, everyone has noticed one simple thing about gratitude or, as I would prefer to say, about personal appreciation. What is your main reason for thankful ness to the person, (let us say who has been so tolerant as to marry you? Why, the very fact or their willingness to have you and to go on putting up with you But then, how your genera appreciation of their attitud springs to life, at some single and it may be, quite trivial new expression of it! They give you thoughtfully chosen present they do you an out-of-the-war service, unasked. It may be small thing but it sends you back to your amazement at having se kind a husband or wife. It is no like a surprise act of politenes from a stranger: it is John's war or Mary's way: it's characteristic

"Now, it is the same with th mercies of God. He has done for us infinite and inexpressibl things: he has called us into being: he has redeemed us with sweat, blood, and tears. He ha placed us in relation with him, a children to a parent; he ha promised us everlasting life, and the sight of his face. What could be more? Yet all these grea things come home to us in littl things; in recoveries of sickness in our children's overcoming of their difficulties; in their findin good teachers; in successes that give them pleasure, and us.

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These things, though small in themselves, bring home to us the infinite kindness of God, and in giving thanks for them, Christians put them on the background of the great mysteries of religion. In offering this holy sacrifice [i.e. the Eucharist], we think it no frivolity or profanation to thank God for the mercies of the daily life. To thank God for them is not to turn our minds aside from the great mystery of Christ's redeeming death and his saving resurrection. No, the little mercies bring the great mercies alive to us; the love that died for us is the love that blesses our daily path and rejoices us in the happiness of our children."

The Rev. Gavin G. Dunbar,
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When Seeing is Believing

"Seeing is believing." This common-sense commonplace is airly straightforward. If you can't see it, can't verify it through rour own experience, it isn't real, sn't believable. Such a thought nspired an entire state-load of beople: the Missourians. Their notto? "I'm from Missouri. You have to show me." Gould Thomas, the doubter, have been from the "show me state?"

I'm sure many folks would say hat Doubting Thomas should be he patron saint of scientists. Didn't he have the researcher's mind as he looked for the evidence to corroborate the other Apostles' assertion, "We have seen the Lord?" Sure, he had seen Jesus bring Lazarus back rom the dead, but this was diferent. Thomas had seen Jesus on he cross. He had seen the nails and the spear do their work. He had seen the stone seal the entrance to the tomb. For Thomas to find this hypothesis credible there would have to be a ot of hard evidence - nail prints and spear wound touched and probed before he could believe.

To be honest, Thomas wasn't nuch of a scientist. Scientia, knowledge, or its pursuit, is the

proper description for more than just the physical or experimental disciplines. Science involves facts, evidence, and proof, it also requires belief. A true scientist believes in what she or he is about. Thomas Kuhn changed the way scientists looked at their field when he introduced the concept of the "paradigm shift" in his Structures of Scientific Revolutions. Kuhn, however, ultimately framed his description of paradigmatic shifts in religious language: faith, belief, conversion. One has to have faith in the paradigm, believe in the work undertaken, and/or be converted to a new way of perceiving what one sees. Thomas, it seems to me, would have benefited from meeting his twentieth-century namesake.

Christmas and Easter always bring a flurry of "religious" topics in the news media. I picked up the paper not long ago and what did I find? There in the opinion/commentary section was an article entitled: "Science and Religion: Academics ponder the ties between faith and facts." Reading the piece triggered memories of a high school film we'd seen on the circulatory system, "Hemo the Magnificent."

Something from that film has always stuck with me. At the very end of this rather fine documentary on research into how our life's blood works there was a reflective section on the task of the researcher. They quoted someone, whose name, unfortunately, has not stayed with me, as saying if ever a "hall of science should be built it must have over the door the words: Ye Must Have Faith." And then they quoted Paul to Timothy, "Prove ye all things to see if they are of God."

You see, a believer isn't a Pollyanna, a naïf. Frankly, I distrust those who blithely wish to discount the value of the intellect and reason. My studies of the Christian faith have led me to believe because of the keen intellects who have been witnesses to the wonder of God's work among us in Jesus Christ. Anselm of Canterbury uttered what I have taken as my own motto (because it was also my seminary's): Fides quaerens intellectum (faith seeking understanding). Jonathan Edwards saw God's beauty not only in the Word, but in his studies of biology and botany as well. Christians stand in a marvelous intellectual tradition, and we Episcopalians have many fine minds in which we should take pride, including number of living folk like Aliste McGrath, John Polkinghorne and Michael Fuller. Our fore bears stood firm in the tradition of Anselm who also said, "believe in order to understand (credo ut intelligam); to that I say "Amen."

Thomas got his chance for proof when Jesus again appeare: in the locked upper room an spoke his calming words, "Peace be with you." Then he took this "Thomas challenge," saying t him, "Put your finger here an see my hands. Reach out you hand and put it in my side. D not doubt but believe." He saw and he believed, but Jesus ha more to say, "Have you believe because you have seen me Blessed are those who have no seen and yet come to believe. Those words, that blessing, an for us — for you and for me.

I guess what I am trying to satis that it's okay to question. It's okay to wonder what happened in Jerusalem a long time ago People have been asking the questions for years. Thomas wasn't wrong to question. He simple raised the wrong set of question Rowan Williams, the archbisho of Canterbury, points this out it Resurrection: Interpreting the

Easter Gospel. "Thomas' failure is not in misunderstanding the nature of resurrection but in demanding special, individual assurance of it: he wants a proof other than the testimony of the group of believers. Beyond the first, irrecoverable moment of encounter, it is essentially through the Church that the world comes to belief, not by an indefinite series of 'special' events... The resurrection faith is bound up with the existence of the community..." [p. 94]

Realizing the importance of the witness of the community makes those lines from First John powerful: "We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life - this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship [the Greek here can also be translated community] with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." The Resurrection calls us into

community with God and with one another and is made real in living out the experience of community and in passing it on.

Thomas' fault wasn't in asking questions, but in asking the wrong questions. Questions are never wrong, but selfishness is, and Thomas was being selfish; he wanted his own set of assurances - his own proof, not the community's. When Jesus offers him what he wants, he realizes his error and says, "My Lord and my God." Thomas comes to be part of the community - a community which extends beyond those who saw with their eyes alone to those who have seen in their hearts. The call implicit in the Resurrection is to community and thus to service - of God and of others. Within that context of community and service we can see how the poet Rainer Maria Rilke's advice to a young poet makes such sense for us as a community of believers:

"... have patience with everything unresolved in your heart and to try to love the questions themselves as if they were locked rooms or books written in a very foreign language. Don't search for the answers, which could not be given to you now, because you would not be able to live them. And the point is, to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps then, someday far in the future, you will gradually, without even noticing it, live your way into the answer." [Letters to a Young Poet, translated by Stephen Mitchell, p. 34-5] As we love and live the questions within the community we will come to understand, and our life together will be an ongoing exercise in self-discovery; which is, in itself, a type of resurrection.

The truth of the matter is that even the apostles had to go beyond experience to come to faith in the resurrection. Although they were "eyewitnesses" to this remarkable occurrence how else could you explain the presence of the Lord in his glorified body being able to come through solid walls? - they had to come to a whole new understanding of God's presence and of themselves. As Anselm said, "I believe in order to understand." For the Christian, believing is seeing.

The late Alexander Schmemann, an American Russian Orthodox theologian, grasped the effect of "believing as seeing" quite powerfully in his book For the Life of the World. He wrote:

But the Christian is precise-

ly the one who knows that the true reality of the world - of this world, of this life of ours - not of some mysterious "other" world - is in Christ; the Christian knows, rather, that Christ is this reality. In its self-sufficiency the world and all that exists in it has no meaning. And as long as we live after the fashion of this world, as long, in other words, as we make our life an end in itself, no meaning and no goals stand, for they are dissolved in death. It is only when we give up freely, totally, unconditionally, the self-sufficiency of our life, when we put all its meaning in Christ, that the "newness of life" - which means a new possession of the world is given to us. The world then truly becomes the sacrament of Christ's presence, the growth of the Kingdom and of life eternal. For Christ "being raised from the dead, dies no more; death has no more dominion over him." Baptism is thus the death of our selfishness and self-sufficiency, and it is the "likeness of Christ's death"

because Christ's death is this unconditional self-surrender. And as Christ's death "trampled down death" because in it the ultimate meaning and strength of life were revealed, so also does our dying with him unite us with the new "life in God."

Thomas saw and believed. We do not see, yet believe, and as a result begin to see the world in a wholly different way. When we come to know that believing is seeing we look at ourselves differently. We realize that here is a person loveable and possessed of enormous worth - a child of God - as the hymnist says, "Changed from glory into glory." When we come to know that believing is seeing we look at those around us differently. We see all persons as loveable, children of God, children for whom Christ died and was raised up again. How can we possibly judge ourselves, or anyone else, in the manner we used to? How can we possibly ever look down upon or condemn another - one for whom Christ died and was raised up because they do not rise to our standard? How can we look at any material thing in

the same way, since it also shares in the benefit of the fresh start given all creation by the resurrection?

John tells us that, "Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name." If believing is seeing, Jesus continues to do many signs through his body: the church. If believing is seeing, you and I become the signs through which others may come to believe and have life in his name. If believing is seeing, the "show me" is given a whole new twist by people who reflect the indescribable joy of God's presence even when they're in the midst of hardship, or difficulty, or pain. If believing is seeing, and I believe it is, the stuff and the people of everyday life become sacraments, means of encounter with the living Christ.

Believing is seeing and what we see in our believing leads us to cry out: "My Lord and my God!" Amen. Alleluia!

The Rev. Dr. Steven Peay,
 St. Mary's Messenger,
 Greenwich, New York

Pause and Cause

For the past 28 years, from the time we were newlyweds, Renee and I have had an annual December tradition (which we now inflict upon our children) of watching the classic 1942 movie, *Holiday Inn*, with Bing Crosby and Fred Astaire.

In the Thanksgiving scene, Bing Crosby is sitting around moping. For the second time he has lost a fiancée to his friend, Fred Astaire. He sits down alone to his Thanksgiving meal. While he's sitting there, he's listening to a record of himself singing the song, "I've Got Plenty to Be Thankful For."

The irony is thick. On the record, Bing is singing about having very little, but being thankful nonetheless. "I've got plenty to be thankful for / No private car, no caviar / No carpet on my floor / Still I've got plenty to be thankful for."

But while the record is playing, Bing at the table has a sarcastic, catty comment for every line of the song he's singing on the record. He's sitting in the midst of plenty, but he's not thankful even a tiny bit.

In scripture, St. Paul did not have an easy life. His autobiogram phy reads like one tragedy after another: "Five times I have received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times was beaten with rods. Once received a stoning. Three times was shipwrecked; for a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on free quent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from bandits, dan ger from my own people, danges from Gentiles, danger in the city danger in the wilderness, danges at sea, danger from false brothers and sisters; in toil and hardship through many a sleepless night hungry and thirsty, often with out food, cold and naked (II Co. 11:24-27)."

And yet, in spite of such hardships, he was always a proponent of living with an attitude of thanksgiving: "Rejoice always pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Chris Jesus for you (I Thess 5:16-18)."

We can always come at lifter from two different angles, sour and cynical or thoughtful and thankful. Yes, we've had drought. Yes, there are economic uncertainties. Still, we all have plenty to be thankful for.

Consider your blessings, and offer thanks to God. As the saying goes, "If you pause to think, you'll have cause to thank."

The Rev. James P. Haney V,
 St. Paul's,
 Lubbock, Texas

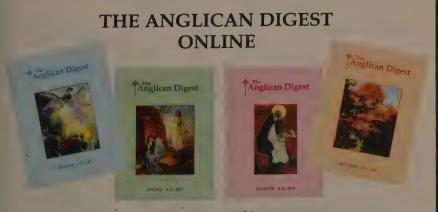


The William Temple Association Prayer

Lord Jesus,
You came to us
as the Word made flesh,
making God's presence
real to all mankind.

Help us through our fellowship of study and prayer to deepen our understanding, to strengthen our discipleship, to witness to your truth, and become temples of your Spirit.

Amen



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Close to the Breast of Jesus

The feast day of St. John the Evangelist on December 27 is lost in the Christmas frenzy. Peter, ames, and John formed the inner ircle of the twelve apostles. It is presumed that John was the roungest of all the apostles and we are left to assume that John was as close to Jesus as anyone.

ohn was with Jesus when the laughter of Jairus was raised. ohn is named as accompanying esus at the Transfiguration and ater in the Garden of Gethsenane. He is the disciple Jesus harges from the cross to care for Mary and is the first disciple to ecognize the significance of the empty tomb. John humbly refers o himself in his gospel as the one whom Jesus loved. At the last supper John is described as the lisciple lying close to the breast of Jesus. John is a faithful servant of the both the earthly and risen esus and is a model of constancy. He is also the only one of the welve who apparently died of old age rather than a martyr's leath.

The call to martyrdom is issued o very few of us. Rare is the time hat anyone of us is required liter-

ally to lay down our life for another. All the apostles, save John, died a violent death and are much to be admired for their faithful willingness to shed their blood for the cause of Christianity.

Martyrdom, in early church history, was actually something many followers of Christ sought. They came to believe that such a sacrifice would draw others to the faith and, in fact, the spread of Christianity was helped along by these heroic deaths.

John's call is similar to what most of us face today. John lived a long life and, over time, witnessed to the power of the resurrection. You and I are not called to go out in a flash. We are invited to a faithful life of constancy. How can we serve Christ quietly and simply today in the lives that have been assigned to us?

In many ways, following John's example requires even more humility than the hero's example. To serve in small ways over the long haul doesn't bring us a lot of attention. It directs attention away from us and to the grace of God which underpins all human activity. John's faithfulness over time points beyond himself.

So many of our activities are self-centered. We want the accolades and the affirmation. We rise and fall with what others think about us or say about us. Too often, we give to feel less guilty or to feel better about ourselves. We resent it when our actions are not appreciated. We toot our own horns, revealing a desperate fear that we are not enough.

The Christ-event calls us to be faithful and giving. After we begin that journey we are invited to be quietly faithful, to lay our very lives close to the breast of Jesus and trust that his actions in the world are more important than ours. We are not called so much to win causes or contests as simply to serve. What good is a big show of anything without the daily follow-through afterwards? Marriages, friendships, parenting, careers - anything of any substance requires constancy. Do good daily and seek a more mature faith. Yearn to be a humble servant. The little things over the long haul are so much more important than the big ones here and there.

The Rev. Robert C.
 Wisnewski, Jr.,
 St. John's,
 Montgomery, Alabama

About the Cover



"Madonna of the Blossoms" a folk art painting by Heather Sleightholm. Heather is a member of St. Dunstan's, Tuls Oklahoma. A wife, mother artist, and all-round creative person, Heather maintains a websit at www.audreyeclectic.com an facebook at Audrey Eclectic.

This work, reminiscent of Sandro Boticelli's "Madonna of the Book" which depicts the incarnate Christ as a small chil with his Blessed Mother and points toward the future looking back. In "Blossoms," the article depicts the nuturing Mary cut dling the sleeping (innocent Holy Infant while embracing the wide-eyed (awareness) Lamb.

"O my son, my son . . ."

Scripture holds very few aments that are, apart from the context of their story, heartwrenching beyond their very words. David's cry of grief when is son is killed violently is one of those. You don't have to be a parent to feel the pain. It's as hough David's heart is being wrung out like a towel, a towel trenched in blood and tears.

"O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had lied instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!" The simple repetition of these few words is more eloquent than a thousand more dramatic words could ever be. Grief stops thinking, reason; only these few words come from the heart of a father.

The story of David's family is a story of intrigue, incest, jealousy, suspicion, and rivalry that culminates in war — war over who would be king. Never unified, David's sons are torn apart forever in enmity. It's a human ragedy whose inevitable end is neartbreak.

Even the story cannot have the effect of David's lament. It's hard not to hear in his cry the harbinger of God's cry over Calvary.

Which brings us to the Atonement. The Anglican Church has little formally-stated doctrine, so we are bound to pay close attention to the few doctrines of our tradition. Church teaching, coming out of religious practices of appeasement, and taking literally the words of Scripture, tries to explain Jesus' violent death in terms of appeasement, substitution, ransom, and sacrifice. By implication, God is either an angry authoritarian who must be placated or an ineffectual deity subject to human-made laws in a universe of his own creation. Either way, God has no heart, and God's justice is ungodly. This is not the God whose face Jesus showed us, the forgiving God of compassion and mercy and unconditional love. The world is redeemed because the Son of God shed his blood? How could a God who requires blood atonement create a man, King David, who sheds tears and cries words of agony at the death of his son? Can we not believe that God cried in agony when Jesus was nailed to the cross?

In our liturgy we say words that allude to "substitutionary atonement." They are drawn from Scripture and from church teaching, and there is truth in them - but the truth is not in the literal understanding. It's possible the writers of New Testament literature didn't mean their words to be read literally. The Eastern mind is much more comfortable with image and mystery than with explanation. Western minds, seeking to understand, tried to explain something that can never be explained. In fact, the more words we put on it, the more obscure and ridiculous it becomes. It is, in fact, a mystery, and it's better left there, in the infinite mystery of God's infinite love for us. Somehow, as Jesus shows us what it is to be fully human, we are brought to be "at one" with God. God's true nature and the highest of human nature are at one in Jesus. Jesus shows us what it is to be at one with God. Each of us must find that place of "at oneness" prepared for us, seeking prayerfully to grow in the knowledge of God's nature and in the possibilities of our own nature at one with God's.

If a human father cries in agony at his son's death, cannot the God who created him cry in agony at his own son's death and at the death of every soldier killed in battle, every child who dies in hunger, and every mother who has no food to feed herses and her children? Does not Goragonize at the death of every electerly person who suffers neglectevery homeless person who seeks shelter and a caring hand and every person who dies of HIV/AIDS and cancer? Does not God know the pain of the or who is left here to grieve? Does not God grieve as Creation fall time and again into neglect an self-serving ways?

We cannot read all of Scriptun literally. Some is meant to be a icon for mystery; some is theole gy expressed as well as word can convey, some is ancient stor with ancient understanding. W are bound, though, to loo through the words of Scriptur and glimpse its meaning, the reson it has been preserved for u God's intent for us in what w know as the Word of God. We as meant to glimpse God, present i the emotions and actions an passions of our sisters and broth ers whose stories we read. I David's human cry of grief w see the God who grieves, a deeply as we grieve and mor deeply than we can know. We as meant to glimpse God in the faces of our sisters and brothe ho live and breathe among us.

And then there is the plea of athos David makes to his leaders as they go into battle: "Deal ently for my sake with the oung man Absalom." In all our ailings God's grief is surrounded by God's mercy. We cannot onceive of a love like this. We an only accept it and live in it and grow in it.

 The Rev. Mary B. Richard, Church of the Holy Cross, Shreveport, Louisiana

Our Readers Write

noticed the informative list of cclesiastical titles on p. 9 of the cummer 2012 issue of TAD. I have something to add to your ist: "The Rev. Sr." is used for nost ordained Sisters, although Mother Hilary, OJN, was Mother" before she was Mother because she was ordained (a bit confusing for nost of us even among religious orders).

- Sr. Sarah, SSM

MEMORIALS

The Hillspeak Memorial Garden at the Foland Memorial Cross offers a place to permanently acknowledge those who have been important in our lives.



You can have a positive influence at Hillspeak and leave a lasting memory. For each \$100 contribution, the name of a person you wish to honor will be engraved on a brick. This stone will become a permanent marker in Trinity Park.

The difference between your contribution and the cost of the memorial will be used to develop the endowment fund and help to ensure that Hillspeak is able to continue its service to the Church. Use the form on page 58. Call us if you have questions or wish to place an order by telephone.

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